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## PROCEEDINGS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

**Biological Society of Washington—Meeting October 18, 1890.**—Mr. H. E. Van Deman, speaking on cultivated fruits in the mountains of North Carolina, said that while scarcely anything had been done in fruit raising for commercial purposes, he believed it would be a profitable investment. Even with the shiftless and slovenly manner of cultivation now in vogue, it was successful. At an altitude of from 2,000 to 3,800 feet the climate is suitable for the growth of apples, and those raised are as fine and keep as well as any grown in the northern States. The flora at the elevation stated being similar to that of New England, he thought the inference fair that fruits succeeding in one place would also succeed in the other. Peaches did not do very well; but the pear, quince, grape, currant, and other northern fruits, he believed could be raised successfully and profitably.

Dr. D. E. Salmon, in discussing the paper, referred to his experience in the region some years ago, and seemed to be rather doubtful that fruit could be successfully raised. The sudden changes from warm to cold often caused a failure in crops, especially with peaches. These last frequently bloom in February, and then the March frosts are fatal to the crop. He did not find the soil as fertile as had been depicted—rather the contrary; and altogether his picture of the beauties of western North Carolina was not as enticing as that of Mr. Van Deman.

Dr. Theodore Gill spoke upon the characteristics of a new family of fishes, the Cyclopteroidea. He referred to the genus *Cyclopterus*, commonly known as the lump-fish, as having been placed in several different positions in schemes of classification. All the earlier writers had given it a wrong position, and it was only in 1872 that Professor Putnam had placed it where it properly belonged, namely, near the *Cottidæ*. This Dr. Gill believed to be its true position. Examination of its osseous structure, its nervous system, its digestive system, and other points, all show its near alliance with the *Cottidæ*, instead of with the *Gobiidæ*, *Gadidæ*, or *Pleuronectidæ*. He gave an outline of the anatomy of the genus, and compared it with other forms, stating his conclusion that its structure showed it to be entitled to rank as the type of a superfamily, which he had named *Cyclopteroidea*.

Prof. Lester F. Ward spoke on the American Triassic Flora. The best development of this series of strata is found in the Connecticut valley, where great numbers of tracks, formerly supposed to be birds,

but now generally referred to reptiles, have been found. Only a few plants are known from this region. This series of rocks extends through New Jersey and Pennsylvania to Virginia and North Carolina. An outcrop of rocks, presumably of this age, is now known on the Potomac, about twenty miles from Washington. From this point the series passes south in a narrow belt, ten or fifteen miles wide, as far as Charlottesville, and is thought to be connected with the Richmond coal field, also Triassic in age. This coal field has yielded many species of fossil plants. They were collected by Rogers, Lyell, Emmons, and others, but no very systematic study has been given the field until recently. Rogers referred the beds to the Oolite of Yorkshire; Emmons referred them to the Permian; Fontaine, within a few years, placed them in the Rhætic, somewhere between the Triassic and Jurassic. The view of Cope, and the one toward which Prof. Ward inclines, is that the Richmond beds, the North Carolina beds, and those of the Connecticut River, really are all of Triassic age, and equivalent to the Keuper group, the upper member of the Triassic in Europe. The total number of plants known from the horizon in North America is comprised in 51 genera and 119 species. These are distributed as follows:

	Genus.	Species.
Problematical organisms, . . . . .	5	9
Ferns, . . . . .	16	36
Equisetaceæ, . . . . .	2	8
Lycopodaceæ, . . . . .	1	1
Cycadaceæ, . . . . .	12	35
Coniferæ, . . . . .	8	19
Monocotyledons, . . . . .	2	2
Doubtful, . . . . .	5	9

The Triassic area is divided into five basins, viz., the Connecticut valley, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, and the western area. The species are distributed as follows:

	Total number.	Peculiar to each.
Connecticut River Valley, . .	23	13
New Jersey and Pennsylvania,	18	5
Virginia, . . . . .	56	34
North Carolina, . . . . .	52	25
Western area, . . . . .	13	11

About one-half the number found in the United States occur also in Europe, the largest number of identical species being in the Rhætic, and the next largest in the Keuper.

Professor Ward referred in some detail to the "Problematical Organisms," mentioning in particular the genus *Dendrophycus*. This was described by Lesquereux from the Coal Measures. Dr. Newberry has more recently described a second species from the Triassic, very similar to Lesquereux's, and Professor Ward referred to a third species which he intended to describe under the name of *D. shumakeri*. This genus is regarded by Dr. Newberry as of vegetable origin, and while Professor Ward did not express a positive opinion as to its nature, he described the *possible* manner of its origin, assuming it to be an Alga. He argued strongly against the idea that because vegetable or carbonaceous matter is wanting the specimen in question or similar ones could not be plants. A discussion of the paper was reserved for the next meeting.—J. F. JAMES.

#### **American Association for the Advancement of Science.—**

At the Indianapolis meeting the following officers were chosen for the ensuing year:

President: Albert B. Prescott, Ann Arbor, Mich.

Vice-Presidents: A (Mathematics and Astronomy), E. W. Hyde, Cincinnati, Ohio; B (Physics), F. E. Nipher, St. Louis; C (Chemistry), R. C. Kedzie, Agricultural College, Mich.; D (Mechanical Science and Engineering), Thomas Gray, Terre Haute; E (Geology and Geography), J. J. Stevenson, New York; F (Biology), J. M. Coulter, Crawfordsville, Ind.; H (Anthropology), Joseph Jastrow, Madison, Wis.; I (Economic Science and Statistics), Edmund J. James, Philadelphia.

Permanent Secretary: F. W. Putnam, Cambridge, Mass.

General Secretary: Harvey W. Wiley, Washington, D. C.

Secretary of the Council: A. W. Butler, Brookville, Ind.

Auditors: Henry Wheatland, Salem, Mass.; Thomas Meehan, Germantown, Pa.

Treasurer: William Lilly, Mauch Chunk, Pa.

**Proceedings of the Natural Science Association of Staten Island.**—October 9th, 1890. Mr. Davis exhibited an egg of the black and white creeper, and read the following memorandum in connection with it:

On the 30th of last May, while in the woods to the northwest of Richmond village, in company with Mr. Leng, I observed a black and white creeper (*Mniotilta varia*) hopping down a tree trunk and holding a caterpillar in her bill. Within a yard of the base of the tree, and well hidden in a close clump of beech sprouts and dead leaves,

was the nest, containing two young. Later in the day I found another nest near the base of a tree, which was concealed by dead leaves only, being nearly covered by them. A dead branch served as an arch or doorway to the nest, which contained three eggs. These nests were made of dead leaves, strips of bark and grass, and were lined with rootlets intermingled with a very few hairs. Woodland brooks abound in soft mossy masses of roots that are put forth by the trees growing near their beds, and it is probable that the supply of nest lining was procured from the stream near by. Mr. Samuels says in his "Oology of New England Birds," that the nest is "lined with cotton from ferns, soft grass, or hair." Nuttall, in the description of the nest found by him, says, "the lining was made of a thin layer of black hair." Black and white creepers have several times been observed throughout the summer on the Island, but they were particularly numerous during the one just past, and this is the first recorded instance of the nest having been found here.

A specimen of *Lymnæa palustris* was presented by Mr. Davis, with the following memorandum:

A species of fresh-water snail was collected some years ago in the brooks flowing into Old Place creek. It was quite plentiful there. The past spring a specimen was handed to Mr. Sanderson Smith, who pronounced it *Lymnæa palustris*, an addition to the list of Staten Island Mollusca.

The following objects, presented by Mr. Wm. Olliff, were shown: Fragments of a large decorated Indian pot, two celts or skin-scrapers, and several examples of concretions,—all from Tottenville and vicinity. A stone axe, found while digging a trench for gas-pipe on Richmond avenue, Clifton, was presented by Mr. James W. Allen.

Mr. Thomas Craig showed plants of *Lemna trisulca*, an addition to the flora of the Island, found in streams in the Clove Valley. Also *Azolla caroliniana*, from the same locality, where it has evidently become thoroughly established since its introduction there by Mr. Samuel Henshaw in 1885. (See Proceedings for Dec. 11th, 1886.)

### The United States National Academy of Sciences.—

The Academy met in Boston on November 11th and 12th. The following papers were read: <sup>1</sup>On the Primary Cleavage Products formed in the digestion of the Albuminoid, Gelatin—R. H. Chittenden. <sup>1</sup>On the Classification and Distribution of Stellar Spectra—Edward C. Pickering. On the Relation of Atmospheric Electricity, Magnetic Storms, and Weather Elements to a case of Traumatic Neuralgia—R. Catlin

(introduced by S. Weir Mitchell). <sup>1</sup>On the Growth of Children studied by Galton's method of Percentile Grades—Henry P. Bowditch. <sup>1</sup>On Electrical Oscillations in Air, together with Spectroscopic Study of the motions of Molecules in Electrical Discharges—John Trowbridge. <sup>1</sup>Some considerations regarding Helmholtz's Theory of Dissonance—Charles R. Cross (introduced by F. A. Walker). <sup>2</sup>A Critical Study of a Combined Meter and Yard upon a surface of Gold, the Meter having subdivisions to two millimeters, and the Yard to tenths of inches—W. A. Rogers. On Evaporation as a disturbing Element in the determination of Temperatures—W. A. Rogers. <sup>2</sup>On the use of the Phonograph in the Study of the Languages of the American Indians—J. Walter Fewkes (introduced by Alpheus Hyatt). <sup>1</sup>On the Probable Loss in the Enumeration of the Colored People of the United States at the Census of 1870—Francis A. Walker. On the Capture of Periodic Comets by Jupiter—H. A. Newton. On the Proteids of the Oat Kernel—Thomas B. Osborne (introduced by S. W. Johnson). On the Present Aspect of the Problems concerning Lexell's Comet—S. C. Chandler. <sup>2</sup>The Great Falls Coal Field, Montana; its Geological Age and Relations—J. S. Newberry. Notes on the Separation of the Oxides in Cerite, Samarskite and Gadolinite—Wolcott Gibbs. On the Relationships of the Cyclopteroidea—Theo. Gill. On the Origin of Electro-Magnetic Waves—Amos E. Dolbear (introduced by John Trowbridge).

<sup>1</sup> Read November 11th.<sup>2</sup> Read November 12th.